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ABSTRACT

The National Conference of State Legislatures convened a task force in 2001 to examine the role of state legislatures in addressing the shortage of qualified and interested candidates for positions in school leadership. This report contains the work of the task force over an 18-month period. The task force sorted data, research, and information about the school leadership dilemma; examined exemplary principals and exemplary schools; discussed policy options; and translated that information into key policy questions state legislatures can use as they formulate policy that focuses on school leadership issues. Issues discussed in the report are the candidate pool and recruitment of school leaders; administrator retention; administrator preparation and program accreditation; professional development; licensure and certification of administrators; governance structures and authority for practice; and school leadership and the No Child Left Behind Act. The report was designed to provide an overview of basic background information to offer some examples of how states have addressed particular issues and to raise some general questions for legislators to ask as they formulate policy regarding school leadership. (WFA)

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National Conference of State Legislatures

2002

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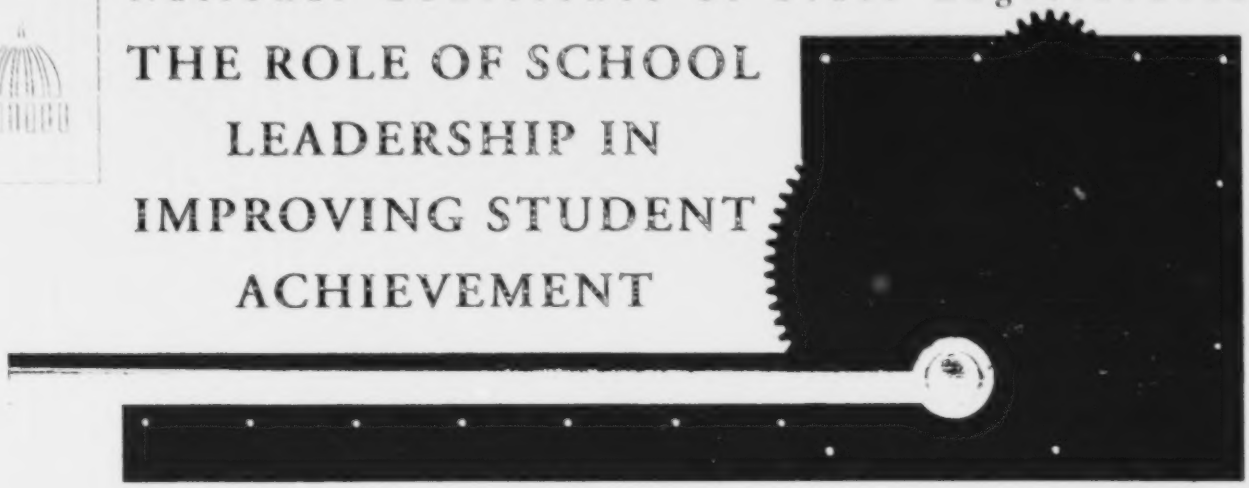
National Conference of State Legislatures

THE ROLE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



By the NCSL Task Force on School Leadership

With the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, pressure on school leaders has intensified. The multiple expectations of the job may be deterring many prospective leaders who feel unprepared to keep up with the diverse demands of contemporary school leadership. The shortage of quality teachers is translating to a shortage of potential school leaders.

- The average time a superintendent stays on the job is between four and five years.
- By 2008, the number of principals needed to fill new positions created by growth is expected to increase by 10 percent to 20 percent.
- Forty percent of current school administrators will be eligible to retire within the next six years.
- Location and size of the district does not appear to be a factor; urban, suburban and rural districts all face shortages, although urban districts are facing more immediate shortages.

WHY FOCUS ON SCHOOL LEADERS?

Strong leadership is essential in order for school reform to be effective and sustained. The leader is one of the most important cogs in the school machine. School districts that have been most successful in improving student achievement have visionary superintendents who develop district policies that focus on both adult and student learning. They recognize the need for effective staff development.

Exemplary schools have an effective leader who sets the tone for the rest of the school and engages all stakeholders—teachers, students, parents and other staff—in schoolwide efforts to improve student learning. A study of principals and superintendents completed by Public Agenda in 2001 found the following.

- Ninety-nine percent of superintendents and 97 percent of principals say that behind every great school is a great principal.
- Seventy-nine percent of superintendents and more than two-thirds of principals believe that the first and most important step in setting a troubled school on the path to success is to find strong and talented building leadership.
- More than two-thirds of both superintendents and principals believe that, with strong leadership, even the most troubled schools can be reformed.

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HOW IS THE ROLE OF SCHOOL LEADERS CHANGING?

The role of school leadership has broadened from performing customary administrative and managerial duties—such as budget oversight, operations and discipline—to include emphasis on other responsibilities such as curriculum development, data analysis and instructional leadership. Among factors that contribute to the changing role are the following.

Increased accountability. Recent legislation, including the 2001 federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), has redefined the role of school administrators by implementing standards and assessments for schools. Because schools now are held accountable for student performance, school leaders must place more emphasis on their roles as instructional leaders, data analysts and curriculum developers.

Students are different. All across the nation, there is increased pressure on public schools to provide an adequate education to a student body that is more racially, economically, linguistically and developmentally diverse than in the past. Approximately, 40 percent of public school students nationwide are children of color. In addition, according to both superintendents and principals across the country, special education needs demand an inordinate amount of district financial and staff resources. Although school leaders are committed to the belief that all students can learn regardless of outside influences, the reality of implementing this laudable belief can be daunting.

Management issues. Staffing vacant positions with talented educators is becoming increasingly more difficult. Only 36 percent of superintendents across the nation are satisfied with how principals in their districts recruit talented teachers, and only 35 percent are satisfied that their principals know how to make difficult decisions. In addition, only 45 percent of principals nationally rate the quality of teachers who apply for positions in their schools as "good" or "excellent."

Instructional responsibilities. School administrators are now more accountable for the academic performance of all their students. Administrative performance will be based on the academic achievement of students. School leaders are expected to know the most effective techniques for improving classroom instructional practices to increase student performance.

State policies and unfunded mandates. The time school leaders must devote to meet state and federal rules and regulations is an important factor in the changing nature of the job. Eighty-five percent of superintendents and 77 percent of principals nationwide feel that an essential quality of a good leader is managing money efficiently and effectively. At the same time, 88 percent of superintendents and 83 percent of principals feel that policymakers are enacting more mandates but are not providing the requisite funding to implement them.

Time requirements of the job. The amount of time people in school leadership positions spend doing their job seems to be increasing. The average elementary school principal works 54 hours per week. High school principals reported working an average of 62 hours per week.

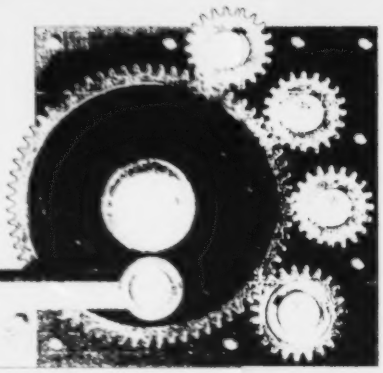
WHY ARE EXEMPLARY SCHOOL LEADERS EFFECTIVE?

National studies and reports also highlight the positive aspects of being an educational leader. Although the changes in the role may have created dissatisfaction for people in the position or to those who may have lost interest because the job is viewed as undoable, many school leaders derive great satisfaction from the position. Some of the rewards cited by school leaders include:

- Working with teachers and students to create a culture in their districts and schools that cultivates learning at all levels;
- Implementing new programs that increase the level of student achievement;
- Being of service to parents, students and the community; and
- The experience of being a proactive, hands-on leader.

The most effective school leaders find satisfaction in seeing students learn and succeed in school, in working with students, and in helping teachers develop and be successful in their work.

CANDIDATE POOL AND RECRUITMENT



Recent studies confirm that it is difficult to find candidates for school leadership positions. The lack of qualified and interested candidates for the burgeoning number of school administration vacancies is not tied to location. School districts of all types across the country are struggling to fill vacancies. The number of positions in educational administration is expected to increase by 10 percent to 20 percent through 2008. The average age of school administrators is 50. Most have been in education for 25 to 30 years, and have served 12 to 15 years as principals and three to five years as superintendents. Forty percent of current school administrators will be eligible to retire in the next six years.

Diversity also is an issue. Although approximately 40 percent of public school students are minorities, 50 percent of principals and 95 percent of superintendents are white males. Thirty-five percent of principals and 13 percent of superintendents are women. This represents a dramatic increase during the last decade, with female principals increasing from 2 percent in 1988 and female superintendents increasing from almost 7 percent in 1992. However, only 16 percent of the nation's principals and 5 percent of superintendents are minorities.

According to a Public Agenda survey released in November 2001, the acuteness of the principal shortage varies among all school districts; only 40 percent of superintendents surveyed felt their district was facing a shortage, although 61 percent of superintendents in urban districts reported an insufficient supply of candidates. It is not simply a matter of finding people with appropriate credentials. Forty-seven percent of teachers across the nation hold master's degrees, many in administration. More than enough "certified" administrators are available to fill open positions. In some cases, teachers who hold administration degrees have no interest in or are not qualified to enter a leadership position within a school. In other situations, teachers with master's degrees in their content area have the leadership qualities and interest needed to be a school administrator but cannot be hired because existing laws for licensure require a degree specifically in administration.

Although policymakers are examining different sources to increase the candidate pool for school leadership positions, the position of assistant principal could be viewed as an excellent training ground for aspiring principals. Unfortunately, the role as it is currently structured does not always provide that training. In many cases, the assistant principal is put into the position of disciplinarian and/or personnel manager and often does not have the opportunity to develop the needed instructional leadership skills. Principals often have neither the time nor the training to mentor and train subordinates adequately prior to the assistant principal's move into a principalship. As a result, assistant principals often find themselves unprepared to become a principal. A similar scenario is common for principals who aspire to move to the superintendency.

Restructuring building leadership to include exemplary teachers and assistant principals in the leadership and instructional decision-making positions is pivotal to efforts to increase the pool of qualified candidates. Creating a better defined path with appropriate training and support along the way is necessary to increase interest in school leadership among teachers and to successfully address the need for more experienced school leaders with the required skills in instructional leadership.

Easing reciprocity requirements for leaders from other states so their certification is more portable is also a way to recruit more qualified candidates to vacant leadership positions. Making pension and benefit packages more portable between states—and, in some states, between districts—also is a strategy to expand the pool of prospective school leaders.

STATE ACTIVITY

- **California** passed legislation in 2002 that provides incentive funding for the instruction and training of school site administrators. The bill requires the state board of education, in consultation with the Commission on Teacher Credentialing or another entity with specified expertise, to develop criteria for the approval of state-qualified training providers. The bill requires the state education agency to develop—and the state board to review and approve—interim and final reports on the status of staff development initiatives.

- **Iowa** enacted legislation in 2000 that created an Evaluator Training Program under the direction of the state Department of Education. The program was created to improve the skills of school district evaluators in making employment decisions and recommendations for licensure and to move teachers through a career path. An administrator who conducts evaluations of teachers must complete the training as a condition of license renewal. Those who complete the training and are certified before July 1, 2004, will receive a stipend of $1,000 from the school district from funds appropriated by the legislature.

- **Missouri** passed legislation in 2002 that allows licensed teachers who hold a master's degree in an area outside administration or who currently are enrolled in a master's program and have a minimum of five years of teaching experience to be issued a temporary administrator's license. The candidate must obtain certification within five years.

- **New Jersey** recently passed legislation that allows school districts to hire school leaders from outside the education field, provided they hold a master's degree in management or a related leadership field. A candidate for the principalship in a school district will be granted a provisional license for one year. The candidate then must participate in the Principal Residency Program, an alternative principal preparation program, under the direction of a mentor.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR LEGISLATORS

1. How many certified administrators are in your state and how many vacancies? Are there ways to encourage teachers with administrative certification to pursue positions in school leadership?

2. How is the role of the assistant principal defined? Is it an avenue for training future principals? Are current principals prepared to provide training to their assistants?

3. How can the number of women and minorities seeking school leadership positions be increased?

4. Does your state have alternative routes to certification for education administrators?
   - For teachers with degrees in areas other than administration?
   - For people with master's degrees in policy or management?

5. Does your state have reciprocity agreements with other states for the licensure of school administrators?

6. Does your state have agreements for pension and benefit portability with other states and with districts within the state?

7. Is there a need for salary incentives for hard-to-staff school districts in your state? If so, should those incentives come from the state or through collaboration with other entities that are interested in the recruitment of school leaders?

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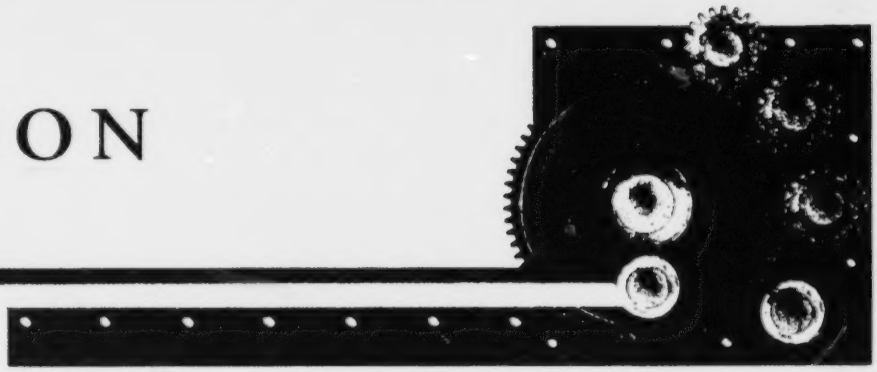
RETENTION



The trend in recent years has been to decrease the number of people in central office school administration and to channel resources directly to schools and teachers. As a result the managerial functions formerly held by central office administrators have been assumed by the remaining central office staff or by the school principal. As more responsibilities have been added, other responsibilities have not been decreased. The current stress of the job, particularly the new emphasis on instructional leadership may be overwhelming for even the most dedicated school leaders, causing them to reconsider their decision to remain in school leadership positions. Studies indicate that school leaders choose to leave the position for some of the following reasons.

- The job is becoming more bureaucratic under new federal and state legislation. Too much time is required to complete paperwork and reporting responsibilities;
- Pay is not commensurate with the responsibilities of the position;
- The job takes too much time outside the regular day;
- School discipline is an increasingly vexing issue with violence an ever-present threat;
- Inadequate support for school leadership positions exist among parents, the community, media and policymakers;
- Not enough authority exists in many areas—such as the freedom to hire and fire personnel—to allow administrators to lead effectively;
- Inadequate opportunities exist to interact with peers.

One strategy that has been used successfully to address concerns about isolation and to provide encouragement for school leaders to remain on the job are formal induction programs, including strategies such as mentoring. The concept of mentoring is relatively new in regard to school leaders, although those involved in a mentoring program report more confidence in performing their jobs.

Job security also is an important issue for school leaders. With new and stricter accountability measures, it may be difficult for administrators to engage in the long-term reform efforts needed to improve school performance if the threat of losing their job persistently exists. Encouraging extended contracts with school leaders that are tied to new accountability requirements may help increase the number of school leaders remaining in the profession.

Another barrier that may keep school leaders—especially principals—from entering and remaining in the position is the amount of compensation they receive compared to many teachers. In some cases, new principals just entering the field do not feel they are paid adequately for the demands of the job they perform. Reevaluating the pay schedule for principals to make it easier for local districts to compensate principals adequately or to provide incentives—such as offering bonuses for leading hard-to-staff, low-achieving schools or for increased school performance—may increase the retention of school leaders.

STATE ACTIVITY

- In **Alabama**, the Teacher Accountability Act—passed in 2000—provides for performance-based contracts for principals and establishes the duties of principals in the public schools, including their role in the daily operation and management of personnel, such as recommending appointment, assignment, promotion or transfer. Principals receive a one-year probationary contract when hired (two years, at the discretion of the district, if it is their first job as principal). At the end of the probationary period, if the district board wishes to renew the contract, the employment period cannot be less than three years.

- **Hawaii** enacted legislation in 2001 to provide incentives to keep exemplary principals and vice principals at the school level. The legislation encourages them to accept long-term assignments in hard-to-staff schools, special needs schools, and schools with high teacher turnover. The incentives include allowing local school boards to grant principals and vice principals longevity step increases more frequently than once every three years. In addition, teachers, principals and vice-principals may accept incentive packages—which may include housing, mileage reimbursement and discounts at local businesses—provided by local communities.

- **Mississippi** established The Beginning Principal Support Pilot Program first implemented by the School Executive Management Institute (SEMI) in 1999. The program provides training for principals who have successfully served for at least three years in the public school system and who are interested in mentoring first-year principals. After completing the program, mentor principals provide support for new principals. The support includes, but is not limited to, direct administrative observation and consultation assistance in administrative planning and preparation, assistance in developing strategies to lead schools effectively, and performing the administrative tasks necessary to school leadership. One school district in each of the state's five congressional districts is awarded approximately $28,000 to participate in the pilot program.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR LEGISLATORS

1. Is the job of the school administrator structured so that one person can adequately perform the job? How can the job be structured more effectively? Has the concept of distributive leadership been explored?

2. Is the structure such that leaders have appropriate authority to effectively perform their jobs? Is the structure clearly defined?

3. What is the current salary structure within the state? Is the salary commensurate with the demands of the position? Is the salary structure the same district to district?
   - Is there a system for performance pay?
   - Are salary incentives an option in hard-to-staff areas?
   - Are non-salary-related incentives an option?

4. How much peer support does the school leader have during the first three to five years on the job?

5. Does the state have an induction and mentoring process? If so, what are the requirements for mentors?
   - Do the mentors have to show effective leadership skills in their schools? Is there a requirement that all mentors be trained? Do trained mentors receive extra compensation?
   - Does the mentor have similar cultural characteristics—such as similar ethnicity, similar gender, similar background, urban vs. rural—as the inductee? Is that needed?

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PREPARATION AND PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

The question about whether schools of education are preparing administrators to be effective school leaders has been a pervasive theme and is emerging in legislatures across the country. Many studies by states and national organizations in recent years argue that traditional educational administration programs throughout the nation are too removed from the realities of schools and effective practice.

State policymakers and practitioners have begun to scrutinize the elements necessary to improve the preparation of school leaders. Many critics of current preparation programs have concluded that the skills and knowledge most necessary for school leaders to succeed include not only problem and data analysis or organizational and team building skills but also improved emphasis on instructional leadership. Some states have begun to develop standards for educational administration programs and are intensifying efforts to assess whether these programs are meeting the needs of schools, which must meet demanding expectations in a new era of heightened accountability. The Interstate School Leaders' Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) have developed similar standards, and the two organizations are working together to create national standards for administrators.

How the program is delivered is also a key issue in the preparation of leaders today. Programs offered by private universities that have an accelerated program for working adults seem to be attracting students. For example, the University of Phoenix trained approximately one-third of the school administrators licensed in Colorado in 2001, and this trend seems to be extending throughout the country.

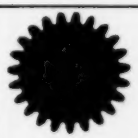
STATE ACTIVITY

- In Delaware, the Aspiring Administrators Program receives an annual appropriation of $140,000 in state funds to provide training to aspiring principals and assistant principals. There is no cost to the participants. The Delaware Board of Education adopted statewide performance-based standards (based on the ISLLC standards) in 1997. All programs offered at the Delaware Principals' Academy are aligned with the Delaware Administrator Standards. Administrators who will evaluate teachers are required to complete training through the Delaware Performance Appraisal System, which is continually updated as new state legislation and policies are enacted.

- The **Kentucky** legislature passed the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) in 1990. As part of KERA, the state appropriated $14.5 million in 1996 for administrator training and professional development programs. The state allocates $2 per pupil for development of statewide programs. To align training and professional development needs to the needs of school districts, each district is required to develop a plan for training its leadership personnel. The Principals for Tomorrow Program is a collaborative effort between the University of Louisville and the Jefferson County Public Schools. The program targets certified school personnel who exhibit leadership qualities and are interested in becoming school principals. The program curriculum incorporates instructional activities, simulations, field experiences, internships and mentoring. Each participant serves more than 400 hours as an intern and is assigned a mentor.

- **Maryland** established the Principal Training pilot program during the 2002 legislative session. The program provides monetary incentives to implement instructionally focused training for school principals. In this initiative, the state Board of Education is directed to award competitive grants of up to $1,500 per principal to schools and school systems that is matched with $500 in local, federal or private funds. Local school superintendents and the state superintendent of schools are to select 100 principals to participate in the training programs.

- The **Mississippi** Legislature created the School Executive Management Institute (SEMI) in the early 1980s with an appropriation of $850,000. Participation in a program offered by SEMI is required under statute. The entry-level program provides to administrators in training an in-depth orientation that focuses on leadership skills and applies research to improve performance, supervision and evaluation, staff development, and curriculum and instruction. To assess whether the schools of education were following state standards, the state required that each of the eight schools that offer programs in educational administration reapply for state accreditation in 1993. Some of the programs were granted accreditation, others were granted temporary accreditation with conditions for improvement, and two programs were closed.



KEY QUESTIONS FOR LEGISLATORS

1. Does your state have a clear set of expected standards and skills for school and district leaders? If yes, are they tied to any national model such as the ISLLC or NCATE model? Are they tied to a performance and/or content-based test?

2. Are preparation programs adequately preparing school leaders to meet state standards and to be successful in the field?

3. What delivery mechanisms should be tied to state standards—public institutions, private institutions, leadership academies?
   - What mechanisms are in place to ensure that programs are meeting state standards?
   - Have any programs been discontinued?

4. What state institution or agency is responsible for oversight of preparation programs?

5. What are the characteristics of the most successful preparation program in your state?
   - What is the curriculum? What is the required number of hours for coursework? What is the required number of hours for school-based or clinical experience?
   - Who serves as faculty—tenured or adjunct professors? How much experience does the faculty have in a K-12 setting? Are they required to demonstrate effective leadership and knowledge of instruction before teaching others?

6. Do the programs work with local school districts to recruit potential candidates, provide clinical opportunities, track success of graduates, and use data collected to improve the overall process?

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The issue of continuing professional development has been an essential element in policy discussions regarding how to ensure that school leaders possess the necessary knowledge and skills. Concern exists that requiring only credit hours may not ensure that administrators are exposed to the most relevant professional development experiences. School leaders and others are voicing their need for improved professional development, specifically in areas such as student assessment, how to use data, instructional leadership and curriculum.

Roughly half the states have minimum professional development requirements for an administrator or principal to renew his or her license. Variation exists among the states as to requirements, particularly regarding the number of years of experience and additional credit hours needed. In **Alaska**, **South Carolina** and **Wisconsin**, for example, a five-year certificate can be renewed only upon completion of six credit hours of graduate work. **Indiana** offers 1) a standard license that is valid for five years after completion of six semester hours and 2) a professional license that is valid for another 10 years upon completion of an additional six semester hours or 90 hours of continuing education credits. **Rhode Island** offers a three-year provisional certificate that cannot be renewed. Upon completion of nine credits (or six credits at the graduate level) a five-year professional certificate is granted.

STATE ACTIVITY

- **Kentucky** requires all districts to develop plans for ongoing learning of their leadership personnel and to submit those plans to the state Board of Education to ensure that the training and professional development needs of all local districts are aligned with state standards. State funds are available to assist local districts in support of training and professional development.

- **North Carolina** established the Principals' Executive Program (PEP) in 1984, which is housed at the University of North Carolina's Center for School Leadership Development. The program, modeled after Harvard's program for business executives, provides professional development and support for all public school principals in the state. Programs, which range from three to 20 days, focus not only on specific topics but also on such general issues as school leadership. Another unique feature of the PEP is that it provides free telephone consultation on school law issues for all North Carolina principals and administrators.

- The **Ohio** Principals' Leadership Academy (OPLA), established as a state agency in 1999, is a collaborative program housed at Ohio State University. Business and education leaders created the academy with $300,000 in corporate support. The academy now receives $1.8 million per year in state funding. Its focus is to teach principals to apply business management techniques in schools. Each cohort that attends the academy stays together for up to two years, with the intent of creating a network of peer support that will endure throughout the principals' careers.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR LEGISLATORS

1. What professional development requirements exist in your state for school leaders?
2. Is professional development tied to licensure in your state? If so, what is required for re-licensure? How many credit hours are required?
3. Does your state require clinical or in-school professional development?
4. Is professional development linked with other districts, schools within a district, preparation programs and local universities?
5. How is professional development funded? Is any support for professional development provided from federal, state, district or private funds?
6. Are school leaders allowed release time so they can be out of the district or out of their school building for professional development activities?

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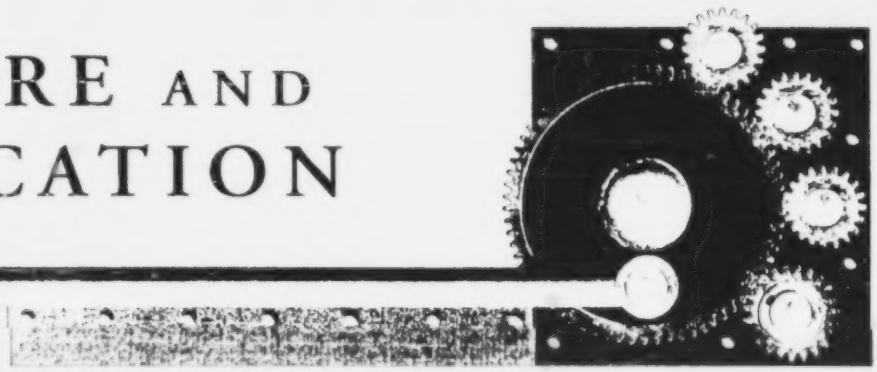
LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION



Most states base licensure on the number of credit hours completed in an approved educational administration program and require that principal candidates have teacher certification and classroom experience. Variation exists across states in several areas regarding administrator licensure requirements, including:

- Number of years the license is valid;
- Years of experience as a licensed educator;
- Hours of professional development necessary for renewal;
- Endorsement areas such as a K-12 or specific endorsement for elementary or secondary administrator;
- Passage of a state examination.

Historically, licensure requirements have focused on "inputs"—the number of courses taken, previous experience as a teacher, etc.— rather than on performance as a school leader. States are attempting to move toward a performance-based system by creating standards and requiring administrators to demonstrate knowledge and skills in order to be licensed or for license renewal. Several states are implementing a tiered licensure structure under which administrator candidates are granted a provisional license upon completion of an approved preparation program, with permanent licensure granted after completion of an induction or mentoring program. The time allotted to complete the clinical or in-school portion of the requirement varies from one year to five years. License renewal and higher levels of certification, similar to that of a "master teacher," are based on a combination of professional development and performance as an administrator.

Other states are considering alternative ways to certify principals and administrators whose backgrounds are in areas other than education—most commonly those holding master's degrees in management and public policy and demonstrated leadership experience. Although this practice is common for recruiting and training teachers—45 states have such alternative programs—it is far less common for principals because virtually all states require aspiring principals to be experienced, fully certified teachers. In regard to superintendents, many states allow districts to apply for a waiver of certification requirements for superintendents who have skills that fill a need in a specific district but who lack traditional administration certification.

The Interstate School Leaders' Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) created six standards to give some direction to state policymakers as they address the licensure requirements of school administrators. To date, 37 states have adopted the ISLLC standards. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has developed similar standards, and the two organizations are working together to create national standards for administrators. Nine states have mandated that prospective principals and administrators pass the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA), a six-hour constructed response test based on the ISLLC standards, prior to certification. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards also is in the process of developing a national certification for principals.

STATE ACTIVITY

- **Delaware** adopted the Educator Accountability Act of 2000. As a result of the act, licensure is dependent upon completion of an induction process, after which a continuing license is issued. Ninety hours of professional development are required for renewal every five years. Further professional development is promoted for administrators, with salary incentives for completion of doctoral studies related to their work, activities to improve knowledge and skills, and efforts to improve student achievement in their schools. Administrators can earn an advanced (10-year) license with continued professional development.

- During the 2002 legislative session, **Florida** dropped the state requirement for licensing principals. This legislation amends the powers and duties of the district school board with regard to designating positions to be filled; prescribing qualifications for those positions; and providing for the appointment, compensation, promotion, suspension and dismissal of employees. The section provides that the district school board may, consistent with adopted district school board policy relating to alternative certification for school principals, appoint people to the position of school principal who do not hold educator certification.

- **Maryland** requires applicants to pass the School Leaders' Licensure Certification (SLLA) to be certified as a principal (Administrator II). Certification is valid for five years. To renew the Administrator II license, each individual must develop an Individualized Professional Development Plan (IPDP) with his or her local school district by the third year of service as a principal. Failure to develop the IPDP will result in loss of certification.

- **New Jersey** has two stages of certification for all administrative certificates except supervisor. Standard certificates for supervisor, school business administrator, principal and school administrator are valid for life. The state has passed legislation that allows school districts to hire school leaders from outside the education field, provided they hold a master's degree in management or leadership. An individual hired by a school district in a leadership capacity is granted a provisional license for one year. He or she then must participate in the principal residency program under the direction of a state-approved mentor.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR LEGISLATORS

1. What are the current requirements for administrator certification or licensure in your state? Are there different licensing requirements for K-12, elementary or secondary education? Is there a need for different licensing requirements?

2. Are there different tiers of licensure for administrators (such as provisional or entry-level, after completion of a certain number of years, and master administrator)? If so, what are the requirements for each level?

3. What are the requirements for renewal in your state?

4. Are your state standards performance-based?

5. Does your state have alternative routes to administrator licensure?
   - For teachers with master's degrees in areas other than educational administration?
   - For people with management experience and master's degrees in business or public policy?

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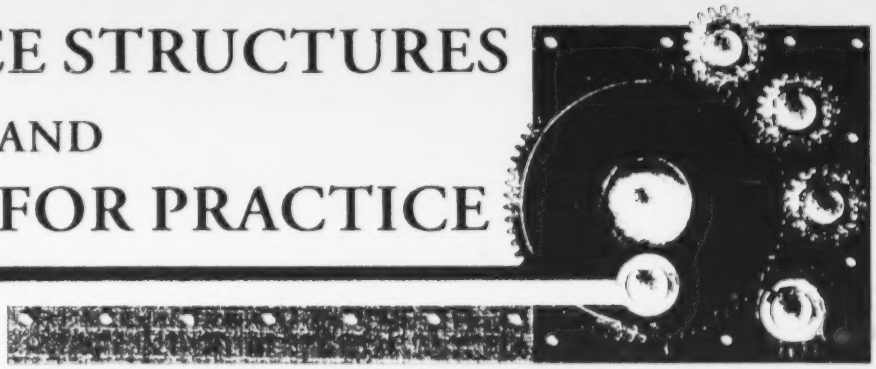
GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AND AUTHORITY FOR PRACTICE



As policymakers examine ways to attract and retain exemplary school leaders, they also are examining the governance structures of K-12 schools and the level of authority school leaders have to perform their respective jobs to most effectively increase student achievement. In most states, local school boards and superintendents make most decisions for the students within their system. In fact, school boards and superintendents in approximately 14,000 districts nationwide oversee the education provided to approximately 45 million students. They are responsible for managing a staff of approximately 5 million people—consisting of administrators, teachers, and non-instructional staff—for budgets totaling about $300 billion and for capital assets worth more than $400 billion.

During the past several decades, funding of education has shifted from the local level—approximately 52 percent of school funds were generated at the local level in 1970—to the state level—approximately 50 percent of school funding nationwide currently is provided by state funds. New Mexico, for example, provides approximately 73 percent of all school funding. Due to the increase in state funding and to the shift in the expectations placed on schools, states are holding local school districts more accountable for the progress of their students.

The federal government—with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001—now is holding states more accountable for the measurable achievement of all students. Several actions have been taken by states to improve student achievement and increase the accountability for schools that fail to do so.

School Takeovers. When districts are not effective in improving school performance, states are beginning to impose sanctions on those districts, including school or district takeovers. Historically, takeovers occurred if there was financial mismanagement within a district. Recently, states have recognized that some schools are unable to meet state performance standards without assistance or intervention. Currently, 24 states have passed legislation that outlines policies for intervention in low-performing schools, and 17 states have policies for intervention at the district level. Under NCLB, the incidence of school or district takeover may increase with the provision that, if no improvement occurs in the achievement of all students within a school for five consecutive years, the school must be restructured.

Charter Schools. Charter schools typically are funded with public money and created within the framework of the public school system, but are founded by parents, community leaders, private companies and educators. Although charter schools continue to be included in a district's adequate yearly progress reporting requirements, they are semi-autonomous and are not always subject to the same requirements as other public schools. The provision in NCLB that districts with schools that do not meet state adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals for two consecutive years must provide parents access to a better performing public school within their district—including charter schools—is likely to increase the number of charter schools.

School-based Management. States such as Kentucky and North Carolina have changed their local governance structure with the creation of school-based management systems. Under such structures, schools are required to create a school council generally comprised of a combination of teachers, parents, community leaders and the principal to work with school boards and the superintendents on general district policies. They also are responsible for a number of school decisions, including, but not limited to, selecting a principal and other school staff; developing and monitoring the school budget; developing curriculum, including instructional practices and text books; and developing and monitoring extracurricular activities for students.

Shared Leadership. States such as Massachusetts have passed legislation that defines and clarifies the roles of the school board, superintendent and principals to share the leadership responsibilities to maximize efficiency and increase the achievement of all students within the district.

The *school board's* role is to develop a vision and educational agenda for the district; hire and evaluate the superintendent; oversee the district budget; and provide a public forum for discussion by the community at large. The *superintendent's* role is to implement the vision and educational agenda for the district; develop an annual budget; develop an instructional agenda; hire principals; and work with principals to hire teachers and school staff. The *principal's* role is to develop directions for the school that follow the vision for the district; work with teachers to develop curriculum and instruction; work with parents to reach student achievement goals; and ensure that the school operates efficiently and provides a safe environment for students and teachers.

Restructuring the Current System. The structure of school governance varies greatly by state. Changing local school governance structures can be difficult for states due to the strong tradition of local control. With the increased focus on student achievement, however, states are beginning to examine current school governance structures and assess their effectiveness. Suggested changes to local school governance structures vary greatly, depending on the state. Louisiana and Nevada, for example, are determining the feasibility of dividing their largest school districts into regional or smaller, separate districts. Kansas, South Dakota and Texas are considering the consolidation of small districts into larger districts. Maryland replaced the elected school board in Baltimore and in Prince George's County with ones appointed jointly by the governor and the county executive officer, and in Hawaii, all schools are run directly by the state.

A significant ramification of NCLB is the effect that this legislation could have on local governance structures. In most states, the school district is responsible for tracking student progress and for offering alternatives to schools that do not meet state AYP goals for two consecutive years. The school district also is responsible for providing transportation and supplemental services if schools do not meet AYP goals for three years. What happens when a school district does not have other choices available? Who is responsible for providing those services—the local municipality, the state or a combination thereof? What entity is responsible for the restructuring or reconstitution of schools if such measures become necessary? Whatever K-12 governance structure exists within a state, it is important for the lines of authority to be clarified and for the lines of communication between different levels to be open.

STATE ACTIVITY

- **Delaware** passed legislation to create a task force to study the structure and delivery of K-12 education, specifically in relation to the structure and boundaries of local education governance structures, increasing school choice for students and their families, and increasing a sense of community.

- **Kansas** passed legislation that allows small districts that merge into larger districts to receive state aid for three years equal to the combined total of that which each individual district would receive before the consolidation.

- **Nevada** passed legislation allowing the Clark County School District (Las Vegas) to reorganize into five regional subdistricts to achieve some of the benefits of deconsolidation. The legislation tracks differentials among the regional subdistricts by means of annual reports.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR LEGISLATORS

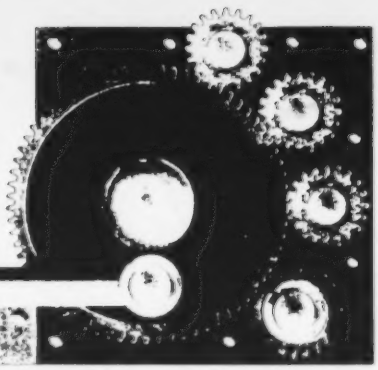
1. Are governance roles and responsibilities clearly defined with the appropriate level of authority for each level? How are the lines of communication and coordination drawn?

2. Does your current governance structure effectively support student learning and public education?

3. Is the accountability structure within your state aligned from the classroom to the state level? Is there a clear understanding among policymakers and educators as to the expected goals and outcomes for student achievement?

4. If schools within a district do not meet state AYP goals, which governance entity is responsible for imposing the sanctions for school choice, restructuring and reconstitution of the school as outlined in the NCLB act?

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND "NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND"



The "No Child Left Behind Act" (NCLB), passed by Congress in 2001, focuses on increasing school accountability. Under this legislation, beginning in the 2002-2003 school year, schools are held accountable for the adequate yearly progress (AYP) of all students in the school, regardless of disability, race or ethnicity, limited English proficiency or economic status . The goal of the act is for schools to demonstrate that 100 percent of their students have reached proficiency at grade level by the 2013-2014 school year. The main indicators for AYP will be measured annually in math and reading and in science at least once in three targeted grade levels.

Several areas apply directly to the work of school leaders.

- *Making schools more accountable for the results of all students by requiring states to test students annually in grades three through eight on their knowledge of reading and math by the 2005-2006 school year.* Testing in science is to be implemented once during the grade spans of three through five, six through nine and 10 through 12 by the 2007-2008 school year. Data are to be desegregated for students based on economic level, race or ethnicity, disability and limited English proficiency.

- *Implementing classroom curriculum that is aligned with the required tests and state standards.* Schools can develop their own curriculum, but programs and practices that have scientific evidence of success in increasing student achievement will be targeted for funding.

- *Providing more choices for parents of children in low-performing schools.* If a school fails to meet state AYP goals as outlined by their state standards for two consecutive years, parents have the right to transfer their children to a better performing public school within their district, including charter schools. If the school fails to meet state standards for three years, supplemental educational services—such as tutoring, after-school services and summer school must be provided. Schools that fail to meet state AYP goals for four consecutive years will be subject to corrective action, and after five years the school must be restructured.

- *Recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers in all classrooms.* A "highly qualified" teacher has obtained full state certification as a teacher (including certification obtained through alternative routes); has passed the state teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the state; or meets the requirements of the state's public charter school law. All new teachers starting in the 2002-2003 school year must meet the requirements to be highly qualified, and all existing teachers must do so by the 2005-2006 school year.

- *Ensuring that all local education agencies or school districts with Title 1 schools have highly qualified paraprofessionals by the 2002-2003 school year.* This means that a paraprofessional must not have less than two years of experience in a classroom and postsecondary education or demonstrated competence in a field or academic subject for which there is a significant shortage of qualified teachers.

To help local education agencies meet the requirements of NCLB, states and school districts have more flexibility in how they use federal funds. Under the act, most districts now can distribute up to 50 percent of funds received under Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, Educational Technology, Innovative Programs, Safe and Drug Free Schools, or Title I among any one of those grants to better address their needs.

The priority areas outlined in the legislation reflect the priorities of stakeholders in education, especially school leaders. The major challenges for school leaders will be to prepare to meet the requirements of the legislation within the timeframe outlined and to address unanticipated fiscal implications of compliance.

NCLB includes programs to help prepare existing and new school leaders meet the requirements outlined in the act

by establishing a national principal recruitment program to assist local districts in:

- Recruiting and training principals by providing financial incentives to aspiring new principals;
- Paying stipends to veteran principals who serve as mentors;
- Providing professional development programs for existing principals, specifically in instructional leadership and management;
- Providing incentives to teachers or individuals from outside the education arena who meet state requirements and are interested in pursing positions in school leadership; and
- Providing incentives to increase new principal retention.

STATE ACTIVITY

- **Arizona** passed legislation in 2002 that designates the office of county school superintendent as a local education service agency eligible to provide programs to school districts and charter schools within the county; assist schools in meeting progress goals; and establish an advisory committee. The legislation authorizes the superintendent, in collaboration with the Department of Education and other state agencies, to provide discretionary programs and relies on student data, staff development, curriculum alignment and technology to improve student performance.
- **California** legislation passed in 2002 requires the superintendent of public instruction to develop a teacher qualification index for each public school in the district. All teachers are to be assigned a rating that will demonstrate comparable improvement in the assignment of credentialed teachers and under-qualified teachers. The legislation provides for the composition of the index and requires that the index be published on the Internet.
- **Kentucky** legislation passed in 2002 defines "achievement gap" on each of the tested areas of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System as the difference in academic performance between male and female students; students with and without disabilities; students with and without English proficiency; students who are on or need free and reduced-lunch programs; and minority and non-minority students. The Department of Education must provide annually to each school council and/or principal disaggregated data on each student subpopulations' performance on the state test. That data must be analyzed on the equity of the education of each student compared to student performance on the statewide test, with an equity analysis on the achievement gap between the student subpopulations. The local board is to establish a policy for reviewing the academic performance of all students, set a biennial target for reducing the achievement gap, and outline consequences for schools and districts that fail to meet the targets.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR LEGISLATORS

1. What is the role of the state in light of the direct federal-local relationship that is created under the NCLB legislation? How is the state's authority over local districts affected? How can that role be strengthened?
2. How does your state assessment compare to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests required to be administered in reading and mathematics in grades four and eight?
3. How will your state fit into the requirements and timelines outlined in NCLB schools that already are facing consequences due to continued low performance under existing state standards?
4. What are the current certification requirements for teachers? For paraprofessionals? Do they meet the requirements outlined in NCLB?
5. Is the accountability system in your state prepared to address the requirement under NCLB for a single accountability system, while incorporating the specific consequences outlined for Title 1 schools?

WHAT CAN LEGISLATORS DO?

- Work with local school boards, superintendents and school level leadership to pass legislation that will recognize the importance of effective school leadership.
- Recognize that the need for high-quality school leadership is essential to continue the quest to improve the achievement of all students in all schools. During the 2002 legislative session, Indiana, Kentucky, Vermont and Virginia passed resolutions to create study commissions on educational leadership specifically to raise public awareness and understanding of the need to improve educational leadership.
- Try to stay in touch with the schools in your district by encouraging both students and school staff in your district to visit the state capitol to gain a better understanding of the legislative process.

SUGGESTED READING

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The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), as part of its work under the State Action For Educational Leadership Project (SAELP) funded by the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds, convened a task force consisting of state legislators, legislative staff, practitioners and other educators to examine the role of state legislatures in addressing the shortage of qualified and interested candidates for positions in school leadership. Chaired by Missouri State Senator Steve Stoll, the task force first met in August 2001 and has worked for the past 18 months to sort data, research and information about the school leadership dilemma; look at exemplary principals and exemplary schools; highlight policy options; and translate that information into key policy questions state legislatures can use as they formulate policy that focuses on the school leadership issue. The information contained in this report is designed to provide an overview of basic background information, to offer some examples of how states have addressed a particular issue, and to raise some general questions for legislators to ask as they formulate policy regarding school leadership. This publication is not meant to be prescriptive; rather, it is meant to be thought-provoking. For more information, please see the Suggested Reading section or contact Frances Groff, senior policy specialist, NCSL Education Program, (303) 364-7700 or Frances.Groff@ncsl.org.

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